



ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION

2012 Intersessional Meetings

ARTICLE 3 – RETENTION OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH

Statement by Australia

25 May 2012

Statement delivered by Mr Philip Kimpton, First Secretary, Australian Permanent Mission, Geneva

Co-Chairs

Australia is pleased to provide an update on retained mines under Article 3 of the Convention, which adds to information in our Article 7 transparency report/

As permitted by the Convention and domestic legislation, Australia has retained stocks of anti-personnel mines for training purposes, which we report annually. As at the end of 2011, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) retained 6,788 anti-personnel mines. Of these training stocks, only 100 have serviceable detonator assemblies.

Like other delegations, a small quantity of these mines is used every year for ADF training requirements, and numbers are regularly reviewed. Retention of some mines is essential for ADF training requirements, including on the destruction and disposal of anti-personnel mines; mine awareness and counter-mine training; and to undertake research into the effects of anti-personnel mines.

The number of anti-personnel mines retained by the ADF when Australia ratified the Convention was based originally on the expected requirements of the Army and Defence Science and Technological Organisation. At that time, in the late 1990s, Army Headquarters decided that 10,000 was a reasonable number to meet this demand. ADF doctrine in the 1990s was primarily focused on conventional conflicts in which anti-personnel mines might be deployed against the ADF. However, the use of anti-personnel mines for training purposes has been far less than was anticipated. In our operational experience and in the years since the Convention entered into force for Australia, anti-personnel mines have not been used for the purposes initially envisaged by ADF doctrine.

I am pleased to inform States Parties and others that therefore, following the most recent review of holdings of retained mines, planning is underway to destroy a significant portion of training mines in the next 12 months. The destruction of these training and research mines will be reported in our annual transparency reports.

Lastly Co-Chairs, the ICBL raised a point with us last year about reporting of retained mines. In their view, not all of Australia's retained anti-personnel mines were "mines" for the purpose of the Convention, because we only held limited numbers of serviceable detonator assemblies. The ICBL suggested that we only need to report the number of mines that could actually operate as anti-personnel mines, rather than the full amount of mines including those without detonator assemblies. We certainly took this point and acknowledge it, but in the interests of maximum transparency we decided to keep reporting the full numbers of anti-personnel mines that Australia retains with a comment that refers to the numbers of serviceable detonator assemblies.

Thank you.